

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Name and Number: WIU #CDCA 160-B, Bright Star

Summary

Results of Analysis:

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements?

NO for units 160B-1, 160B-2C, 160B-2D, 160B-2G, and 160B-3B.

YES for units 160B-2A, 160B-2B, 160B-2E, 160B-2F, 160B-3A, 160B-4A, and 160B-4B.

2. Do the eligible units appear to be natural? **YES**

3. Do the eligible units offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? **YES**

4. Do the eligible units have supplemental values? **YES**

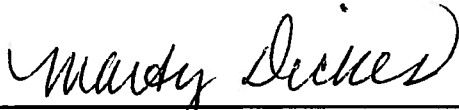
Conclusion

Units 160B-1, 160B-2C, 160B-2D, 160B-2G, and 160B-3B do NOT have wilderness characteristics.

Units 160B-2A, 160B-2B, 160B-2E, 160B-2F, 160B-3A, 160B-4A, and 160B-4B HAVE wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by:

Team Member:



Marty Dickes, Wilderness Coordinator, BLM Ridgecrest FO

Date: 10-18-13

Approved by:

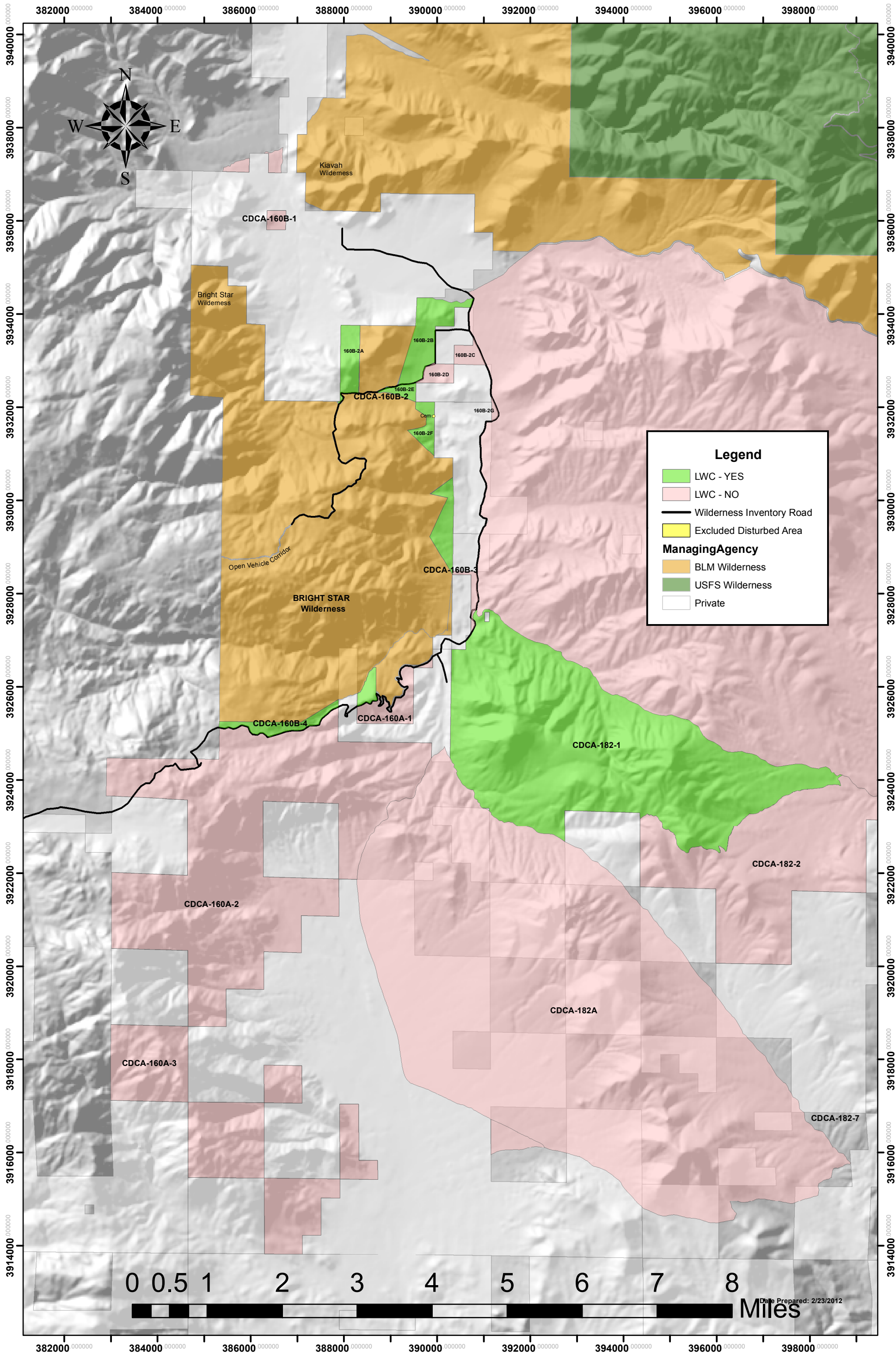


Carl B. Symons, Field Manager

10/25/2013

Date

This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-2.



FINAL COMPOSITE INVENTORY MAP
WIU #CDCA 160A & 160B (BRIGHT STAR)
October 25, 2013



Year **2013** Inventory Unit Number/Name **WIU #CDCA 160B (Bright Star) Units**

FORM 1

Documentation of BLM Wilderness Inventory Findings On Record

1. Is there existing BLM wilderness inventory information on all or part of this area? Yes

Inventory Source: 1979 CDCA Wilderness Inventory Final Descriptive Narratives, BLM Ridgecrest FO

Inventory Unit Name(s)/Number(s): WIU #CDCA 160B

Map Name(s)/Number(s): USDI BLM CASO Wilderness Final Inventory, March 31, 1979

BLM District(s)/Field Office(s): Ridgecrest Field Office

2. BLM Inventory Findings on Record

Existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics:

Inventory Source: 1979 CDCA Wilderness Inventory Final Descriptive Narratives, BLM, Ridgecrest FO

Unit#/ Name	Size (acres)	Natural Condition? Y/N	Outstanding Solitude? Y/N	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Y/N	Supplemental Values? Y/N
1979 Findings within WIU #CDCA 160B	Y Unspecified # of acres	Y with respect to most of the area	Y	Y	Y
2013 Findings within WIU #CDCA 160B-1	N 102.45 Non- contiguous acres	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2013 Findings within WIU #CDCA 160B-2A	Y 148.89 contiguous acres	Y	Y	Y	Y
2013 Findings within WIU #CDCA 160B-2B	Y 287.25 contiguous acres	Y	Y	Y	Y

Unit#/ Name	Size (acres)	Natural Condition? Y/N	Outstanding Solitude? Y/N	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Y/N	Supplemental Values? Y/N
2013 Findings within WIU #CDCA 160B-2C	N 62.58 Non- contiguous acres	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2013 Findings within WIU #CDCA 160B-2D	N 66.17 Non- contiguous acres	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2013 Findings within WIU #CDCA 160B-2E	Y 39.74 contiguous acres	Y	Y	Y	Y
2013 Findings within WIU #CDCA 160B-2F	Y 82.80 contiguous acres	Y	Y	Y	Y
2013 Findings within WIU #CDCA 160B-2G	N 11.90 Non- contiguous acres	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2013 Findings within WIU #CDCA 160B-3A	Y 144.64 contiguous acres	Y	Y	Y	Y
2013 Findings within WIU #CDCA 160B-3B	N 40.28 Non- contiguous acres	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2013 Findings within WIU #CDCA 160B-4A	Y 51.75 contiguous acres	Y	Y	Y	Y
2013 Findings within WIU #CDCA 160B-4B	Y 121.28 contiguous acres	Y	Y	Y	Y

Summarize any known primary reasons for prior findings in this table:

The original 1979 WIU #160B was bounded on the north by the California Desert Conservation Area/Jawbone-Butterbrecht ACEC boundary; on the east by the Kelso Valley Road; on the south by the Piute Mountain Road; and on the west by Sequoia

National Forest. Approximately 25-35 percent of the area along the northern and eastern flanks was non-public (private) land.

Private lands on the northern and eastern edges were determined to show evidence of man's works. The eastern portion, just west of Kelso Valley Road, was found to contain several homes, ranches, and roads. Several off-road vehicle ways along the southern boundary were found to have degraded the natural condition of the landscape. However, the core defined as encompassing Kelso Peak and associated drainages to the north, south, and east, was found to be roadless and unimpacted by man. This area was determined to be in a natural condition and to have retained its primeval character. Mountainous regions provided diverse terrain with outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation, not found near human habitations on the valley floor. Opportunities for solitude were found to be enhanced by the remoteness of the core area and the continuity between the Kelso Mountains and the Piute Mountain Range, a RARE II Area within Sequoia National Forest.

In the 1990 BLM CA Statewide Wilderness Study Report, BLM recommended 0 acres for wilderness out of what had become a 9,341-acre Kelso Peak Wilderness Study Area. BLM felt that the area's wilderness values did not exceed its potential for other uses.

In 1994 Congress disagreed. The California Desert Protection Act designated 8,191 acres as the Bright Star Wilderness. In 2011, another 464 acres were added to the Bright Star Wilderness. BLM was able to purchase several private parcels from the Kern River Audubon Society. These acres were undeveloped lands, comprised of both inholdings and edgeholdings, located immediately west of the Kelso Valley Road and north of the Piute Mountain Road. The wilderness area was expanded to 8,655 acres. BLM's current wilderness boundary reflects the addition of these newly acquired lands. (See attached maps.)

FORM 2

Documentation Of Current Wilderness Inventory Conditions

Unit Number/Name **WIU #CDCA 160B, Bright Star**

(1) Sufficient size

NO for Units 160B-1, 160B-2C, 160B-2D, 160B-2G, and 160B-3B.

YES for Units 160B-2A, 160B-2B, 160B-2E, 160B-2F, 160B-3A, 160B-4A, and 160B-4B.

Acreage: Units 160B-1, 160B-2C, 160B-2D, 160B-2G, and 160B-3B are comprised of 102.45, 62.58, 66.17, 11.9, and 40.28 acres of public land respectively, totaling 283.38 acres.

Units 160B-2A, 160B-2B, 160B-2E, 160B-2F, 160B-3A, 160B-4A, and 160B-4B are comprised of 148.89, 287.25, 39.74, 82.80, 144.64, 51.75 and 121.28 acres of public land, totaling 876.35 acres.

All 2013 acreages were calculated in GIS.

Boundary revision: Boundaries have been adjusted to exclude all private land within the original WIU boundary. This has resulted in several distinct subunits. Adjustments reflect the current land status, including some changes in private ownership and recent public acquisitions. See attached map.

Description of Current Conditions

Land ownership: BLM (grand total of 1,159.73 acres); private inholdings (0 acres).

Location: Kern County, approximately 25 miles southeast of the town of Lake Isabella and 45 miles southwest of Ridgecrest, California. These units are located south of the Ridgecrest BLM Jawbone Butterbrecht ACEC/CDD boundary; east of the Ridgecrest BLM/CDD and Sequoia National Forest boundary; north of the Piute Mountain Road; and east of the Kelso Valley Road.

Topography: Some valley floor, but mostly steep, mountainous terrain, with riverine drainages. Elevations range from 3,000'-6,000'.

Vegetation features: The Mojave Desert, Sierra Nevada, San Joaquin Valley and Transverse Range eco-regions all meet here, in what could be called a subregion of the southern Sierra Nevada. The area is located at the western edge of the Desert Floristic Province as described in the *Jepson Manual, Higher Plants*

of California. It is adjacent to the California Floristic Province and the Great Basin Floristic Province. This has resulted in components from all eco-regions and provinces occurring in the area. Mojave Desert species such as creosote bush and Joshua tree occupy lower elevations. Spiney hop sage, canyon live oak, pinyon pine, Utah juniper, and Whipple yucca occupy mid-elevations. Upper elevations support gray pine, Jeffrey pine, Sierra juniper, and even white fir. Riparian areas support cottonwoods and extensive stands of willows.

Major human uses/activities: Hiking, horseback riding, and hunting. Most BLM sections are surrounded by private lands with little to no public vehicle access. Currently there are no open designated vehicle routes in the eligible sections, and little to no trace of vehicle routes in these sections.

With respect to Ineligible Units 160B-1, 160B-2C, 160B-2D, 160B-2G, and 160B-3B: These units are isolated and are of insufficient size to make practicable their preservation and use as wilderness in an unimpaired condition.

NOTE: Ineligible unit 160B-3B is a narrow projection of an eligible unit 160B-3A. However, the bridge between these units is extremely narrow and the bulk of the ineligible unit is isolated and separated from existing wilderness by a large block of private land, making it impractical to manage for wilderness characteristics.

With respect to Eligible Units 160B-2A, 160B-2B, 160B-2E, 160B-2F, 160B-3A, 160B-4A, and 160B-4B:

(2) Natural condition

Yes. They are undeveloped tracts of public land. They appear and function as natural extensions of the topographic features and vegetation communities found within the flanking wilderness areas. Most of the units are surrounded by private lands and/or are behind private, range, or fire fences, that prevent public vehicle access. With one exception, there are no open designated vehicle routes within any of these units.

The one exception is route SE431, which crosses private land to BLM land through Unit 160B-2, continuing on through the Bright Star Wilderness as an open vehicle corridor to the Sequoia National Forest boundary. This route is a wilderness inventory road for up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of its length where it is regularly maintained by BLM for vehicle use. The last 1-1.5 miles of the route to the Sequoia National Forest boundary does not qualify as a wilderness inventory road as it is not maintained by BLM and is currently suitable for quad and dirtbike use only. As a wilderness inventory road, SE431 bisects Unit 160B-2, separating it into additional subunits. (See attached maps.)

NOTE: The cemetery in Unit 160B-2F straddles the public/private land boundary in 160B-2F and has been carved out of the eligible unit. It is an historic cemetery

that is no longer in use except as a target shooting area for the adjacent landowner (a private fence blocks public vehicle access to the site).

(3) Outstanding opportunities for solitude

Yes. These units cannot be accessed without crossing private property and/or fence lines. And except for SE431 and one unrecognized branch off of it, they cannot be accessed by road or vehicle route, as such routes do not exist. They can be accessed by foot or on horseback from wilderness as well as from across private land. In short, these are remote and isolated areas that are difficult to access and which very few people visit. They are far from the active open vehicle corridor through wilderness. And as such, they offer additional approaches to wilderness that expand opportunities for solitude in the more peripheral areas.

In addition, the topography is quite variable, ranging from mountains, to steep drainages, to undulating alluvial fans. The vegetation is quite variable as well, ranging from Mojave scrub, to Joshua tree and pinyon-juniper woodland, to cottonwood-willow riparian, to grey pine and Jeffrey forests. Visitors can find solitude out of sight and sound of other people within very short distances.

(4) Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation

Yes. There are no vehicle routes except for SE431 and no known trails. Travel is cross-country by necessity, requiring good map reading, route finding, navigation, and hiking/equestrian skills.

(5) Supplemental values

Yes.

Riparian Habitat: Riparian habitat exists in Unit 160B-3. This unit should be surveyed for Kelso Creek monkey flower.

Wildlife: These areas support a wide variety of bird and mammal species, including large carnivores such as black bear, mountain lion, coyote, and bobcat. Important game species are also present, such as mule deer, chukar, mountain quail, and California quail. Large cottonwoods and cliffs provide nesting sites for raptors. Riparian areas provide water, forage, and cover for wildlife, and are essential habitat for resident and migrant birds.

Cultural Resources: These units lie within the Jawbone-Butterbrecht ACEC which was designated in part to protect Native American cultural and religious values. Cultural resource inventory has been limited to wilderness and to small-scale restoration and fencing projects. These have resulted in the identification of some prehistoric and historic sites, with the expectation that more sites exist within the area at large.